

# Oak Middle School Happenings

SHREWSBURY



“Respect is Our Cornerstone”

November 2004

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## Principals' Corner

Dear Parents,

We hope that you and your families had a most enjoyable Thanksgiving Holiday. Beyond the facilities challenges that we continue to face, detailed in this issue of the “Happenings”, the teaching and learning environment remains a very positive one.

Evidence of this is found in several distinct areas. Our team, Foreign Language and Allied Arts teachers continue to provide the full instructional program with a start of the school year enthusiasm mirrored by the students' enthusiasm for learning. The number of Discipline Reports for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders comparing this year to last has been reduced by approximately 75%. About 450 7<sup>th</sup> and 450 8<sup>th</sup> graders sat on the Cafeteria floor and were complimented widely for their respectful response to community based Veterans' Day programs. Student response to every extracurricular activity offered to them has been tremendous – Cross Country, “Student Voice” (council), School Newspaper, Peer Helpers, Afterschool Flag Football, Ski Club, Science Olympiad (academic competition), MathCounts (academic competition), Boys and Girls Interscholastic Basketball, Cheerleading and the  
*(continued on page 2)*

## PTO President's Corner

Each year the PTO organizes a host of events geared to make the Middle School experience more meaningful to students and parents. That's right, parents too!

Remember that pledge you made to yourself at the beginning of the school year? You know the one, “This is the year I am going to get more involved in the school's activities.” Well, we are pleased to see so many parents (men and women) stepping forward to enjoy the PTO and school events as a participant instead of a spectator.

As we “close the book” on some of the PTO events of this year, we open the book on others. Dances, socials, hospitality, filming, field trips and fundraising events are already being organized and planned. Why not take the opportunity to become a participant in an upcoming event? And you don't have to worry about being “pegged to run a committee.” Sure, we will eventually need people who want to run an event, plan an activity, or help with filming student achievements, but for now, just get involved the way you want. Below is a list of upcoming events:

*(continued on page 2)*

**(Principals' Corner, continued from page 1)**

special interest Afterschool Activities Program. The completion of a very successful Cross Country program was celebrated by runners, coaches and parents at a gathering a few days ago. All of the other activities mentioned are underway. We are also excited about PTO's MSNN programming, which is now featuring student learning from visits in the school, broadcast on Channel 34. Your child's academic progress for the first trimester that ends December 8th will be sent to you via the Monday folder on 12/20/04.

The aforementioned accomplishments are a tribute to the OMS Staff collectively, the students and you for the support you have lent our efforts from the first day of school this year. The positive attitudes toward learning and contributions your children bring to school each day in creating a "Respect is Our Cornerstone" learning environment are invaluable resources in our collective efforts. Thank you for that continued investment in your child's learning experience.

Finally, we want to thank you for your patience as we worked with the Police Department to create a safe efficient traffic pattern between the two middle schools. We think we have made significant improvements in that pursuit and do not anticipate any additional charges this year.

**Steve Lobban**  
**Pam Farrill**  
**Beth Schaper**

**(PTO President's Corner, continued from page 1)**

*January 7, 2005 – 7/8 Dance*  
*January 2005 – small fundraising event*  
*TBA – 5/6 Social*  
*March 4, 2005 – 7/8 Dance*  
*March 2005, Magazine Drive*  
*Monthly – Student filming*

Aside from the above volunteer opportunities, we are also looking for a person to take on the role of Publicity. The Publicity person

communicates with the local media about Middle School events. This is a great way learn what is going on at the Middle School, and how the students are making an impact within the local and school community. If you are interested, contact Erica Bodden at [smspto@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:smspto@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us).

Thanks again for all those who have made this year go smoothly, and I look forward to meeting others who get involved in future event!

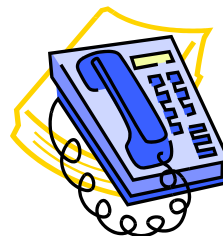
**Michael Brand**  
**PTO President**

**PTO News**

**Magazine Drive (Please Save your Renewals)**

The next major fundraiser for the Oak and Sherwood Middle Schools will be the annual Magazine Drive in March of 2005. We are asking everyone to save their magazine renewals and/or new subscriptions and support this fundraiser by ordering them through the school in March. Thank you.

**2004-2005 Middle School Campus Directory!!**



Family contact information, faculty & staff rosters, team lists, calendars and much more!

To reserve your copy, call  
Mary Garrity @ 845-2981.

Not too many directories left, call today!

**School Council News**

The Oak Middle School Council met in the 2002 Room at Shrewsbury High School on Wednesday evening, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The meeting focused on three areas: Facilities, 2005-

06 budget and current program scheduling advantages and limitations. Facilities particulars appear elsewhere in this issue of the "Happenings" with some enthusiasm for prospective garden and grounds improvement ideas initiated by a subcommittee of the PTO. Budget proposals including reinstatement of the late bus, adding a "culture" component to the Foreign Language program for students who are 1-2 years behind instructionally, and staffing to support students with MCAS improvement needs beyond what the teamed teachers can provide, were proposals given broad support. This year's schedule has the instructional advantage of connecting Foreign Language and Allied Arts teachers to fewer teams improving consistency of instruction and opportunities for integrating instruction from different subject areas. It has the disadvantages of less social connection for students across their grade level and balancing

class sizes across the three languages of Spanish, French and Latin.

A special thanks is extended to Parent Representative Jody Maher who served as a Council Member last year and was not able to continue this year. Jody was a responsible member who represented parent issues in a direct positive manner.

A list of current members of the School Council is included in this newsletter. They are available to you as resources in addressing OMS issues. The Council meets the first Wednesday of each Month from 7:00-8:00p.m. The agenda for December 1<sup>st</sup> will be a review of the School Improvement Plan's Professional Development Goal and current issues brought forward by the Council. The meeting will be held in the 2002 Room at Shrewsbury High School.

## OAK MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS 2004-05

| Name               | Title            | Address             | Phone        | E-Mail                       |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Steve Lobban       | Administrator    | Oak Middle School   | 508-841-1210 | slobban@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us |
| Charles Fournier   | Community Member | 401 Main Street     | 508-845-6816 |                              |
| John Martello      | Community Member | 54 Longfellow Road  | 508-842-3130 | jmarte4736@aol.com           |
| Christine Reilly   | Parent           | 42 Longfellow Road  | 508-845-6375 | chrisreilly@townisp.com      |
| Cynthia Genco*     | Parent           | 6 Rolling Hill Road | 508-842-1122 | CRG86@verizon.net            |
| Gayle Bowe*        | Parent           | 4 Brookdale Circle  | 508-842-6560 | GBOWE@nsboro.k12.ma.us       |
| Janette Chaparian* | Parent           | 9 Jamie Lane        | 508-845-6401 | Jak_selectx@townisp.com      |
| Deborah DelDotto   | Parent           | 318 Spring Street   | 508-842-5093 | d.deldotto@verizon.net       |
| Diane Doerfler     | Parent           | 25 Pinedale Road    | 508-754-9537 | doerfler@assumption.edu      |
| Eileen Gallant     | Parent           | 39 Cypress Avenue   | 508-842-1487 | ecgallant@worldnet.att.net   |
| Kate Traynor       | Parent           | 85 School Street    | 508-845-9139 | ktraynor@partners.org        |

|                          |         |                   |              |                                   |
|--------------------------|---------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Joanne Billings          | Teacher | Oak Middle School | 508-841-1200 | jbillings@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us    |
| Maureen Travers*         | Teacher | Oak Middle School | 508-841-1200 | mtravers@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us     |
| Steve Winters*           | Teacher | Oak Middle School | 508-841-1200 | swinters@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us     |
| Marilynn<br>Vaillancourt | Teacher | Oak Middle School | 508-841-1200 | mvallancourt@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us |
| Peg Holdash              | Teacher | Oak Middle School | 508-841-1200 | pholdash@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us     |
| Laura Estaphan*          | Teacher | Oak Middle School | 508-841-1200 | lestaphan@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us    |

\* *new council  
member*

### **Oak Middle School Facilities Update**

When will the rest of the facilities be officially done? Why is it taking so long?

The answer to the second question provides a partial explanation to the first. Dr. Bent referenced these issues in the note he sent along to “Care Givers and Colleagues” on 11/15/04. The town, the bonding company, and the Jackson Construction Company, employed by the bonding company to finish the school, are working to solve the ongoing problems of completion of work in the currently occupied space, completion of work in the areas not available to us, coordination of engineering and local inspections to make sure things have been done according to specifications as well as maintain a schedule of payments to keep the subcontractors on the job. The pace of work has slowed in recent weeks as the parties involved work to address these issues.

Therefore, at the present time there is no “schedule of work” that has been formally presented that establishes a projected end date when we can expect the remaining facilities to be available. At the current rate of work completion I do not expect that we will be able to access any additional portions of the building until the end of December at the earliest. In any scenario the gymnasium, which currently has its floor covered and is being used as a construction

storage area, will be the last of the facilities to come on line.

In spite of these obstacles some important things have been accomplished in recent days. Our cafeteria is almost fully functional with one last stove to be tested to make us fully functional. A “Soups of the Day” server and Salad Bar have quickly become popular with students and staff. Exterior egress lighting is in its final stages of completion and once done will allow us to request approval from the town’s fire chief and building inspector for the school’s evening use. Similarly, the building’s security system is near completion and once tested will allow us to establish procedures that will not require the presence of security guards during after school hours. A flexible dividing door has been installed in the cafeteria dining area which now creates a large group instructional space, during the non-lunch instructional hours (8:00-10:30 a.m., 1:00-2:11 p.m.) separated from the kitchen preparation and serving area. A sufficient number of additional student lockers have now been installed to provide each student with their own individual locker. School Department work is in progress to install the technology systems that will immediately connect additional facilities, once they come on line, to the rest of the school. The new furniture purchased for the staff dining room has now been installed.

The uncertainty of the end point of this work

provides challenges for the school community generally and specifically for the Foreign Language, Physical Education, Technology, Health, Music and Art teachers whose designated work stations remain the trailers on the front lawn and instructional stations remain team classrooms, the cafeteria dining area, auditorium lobby space or the athletic field. Our challenge will be to continue to advocate for completion of additional space at every opportunity and to continue to work together in the implementation of adaptive plans to insure that we deliver the best program we are capable of to the students we serve.

### **Nurse's Notes- November 2004**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

There has been a lot of publicity in the media and medical journals lately about heavy backpacks and back problems. This issue is becoming a real problem, especially amongst middle schoolers, who have more homework and books than they have had in the past and may not yet be quite adept at organizing assignments. They tend to bring *everything* home in their backpacks out of fear of forgetting something. This includes heavy binders and books that they may not necessarily need that evening. Please see attached handout on how to pack a backpack correctly and go over this with your child.

Just a reminder that children should stay home from school if:

- They have a temperature over 100 F, the student may return to school after having a normal temperature for 24 hours.
- They are on antibiotics *less than* 24 hours for an infection.
- They are vomiting. The student may return to school if vomiting has stopped for 12 hours or more, and the child is able to tolerate a normal diet.
- They have diarrhea. The student may return to school if diarrhea has stopped for 12 hours or more and the child is able to tolerate a normal diet.
- The student has an undiagnosed rash.
- The student has severe cold symptoms.

- The student is diagnosed with a communicable disease i.e.: chicken pox, impetigo, pertussis, scabies, conjunctivitis, strep throat. Please contact the school nurse before sending your child back to school. Physician's documentation is required to allow the child back to school.

A few more reminders...

- Per school policy, children are not allowed to carry medications (prescription and over the counter) to and from school. A parent must hand deliver/pick up medication and make arrangements with the school nurse for dispensing.
- Children are not allowed to come to school with a narcotic in their system after a surgical procedure. The school nurse does not dispense narcotics to children after surgery. Children should stay home after surgical procedures that require narcotics for pain control.
- Children who carry cell phones at school must only use them in an emergency. Calling a parent to come pick them up is not appropriate. The child should report to the nurse for any health problems. The nurse will contact the parent/guardian.

Please contact me any time with any questions/concerns.

***Lee-Anne Saccone, MSN, RN***  
***(508) 841-1204***

### **Dismissal of Students, Cell Phones, Parent Pick up at Dances**

We are requesting your help in addressing these issues that have recently surfaced. First, there were three instances where students contacted parents and asked to be picked up from school and departed with their parents without officially being dismissed from the Health or Main Office. Should your child contact you in this manner, feel free to respond as you deem appropriate but please make sure we are notified prior to dismissal. Second, cell phones are specifically

referenced in the Student Handbook. They should “disappear” upon entrance to school and in no way interfere with teaching or learning. If that happens the phone will be taken from the student and returned at the end of the school day. Last, we have established a twenty minute window for parent pick-up following completion of PTO sponsored dances which now conclude at 9:30 p.m. Students who are picked up after 9:50 p.m. will lose the privilege of attending the next dance. These issues of concern have been infrequent but sufficient in occurrence to warrant this request for your help to address them. Thank you for your assistance in that regard.

### **The Home-School Connection**



### **The Home-School Connection Attend a Parent Workshop Sponsored by Your PTO!**

Dear Parents of Shrewsbury Students,

You are invited to attend the next free workshop in the PreK –12 PTO sponsored parent workshop series.

**What:** Study Skills, Test Taking, and Organizational Skills

**When:** Monday December 6<sup>th</sup>, 7 to 8:30 PM

**Where:** Coolidge Elementary School, Cafeteria

**Presenters:** *Rita Innamorati*-Classroom teacher, Coolidge School  
*Annemarie Mansfield*-Classroom teacher, Coolidge School

**This workshop** will focus on strategies that parents can use at home to help their children develop good study habits. The tips and suggestions shared during this workshop will be useful throughout your child’s years of schooling.

If possible, please leave me a message at 508-841-8300 ext. 4220 or email me at [lbuxamusa@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:lbuxamusa@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us), if you are planning to attend this workshop. When leaving a message, please include your name and phone number.

***Loubaina Buxamusa***  
***Program Coordinator***

### **National Current Events League** **November 2004 - Meet #1**

#### **Grade 8 Top Scorers**

Michael Horton

Ben Nylen

Bradford Harlow

Carter Stevens

Nate Richardson

Ian Powers

Ruby Lee

Kyle Carbone

Edward Smongeski

Kevin Liang

#### **Grade 7 Top Scorers**

Scott Goodwinn

Nick Dean

Hanzhi Zhu

Aaron King

Charlie Long

Robert Le

Greg George

Jeffrey Herman

Matt Altomari

Kevin Thompson

***Congratulations on an  
outstanding job!!!***

### **Community Gift Giving Drive**

The ELNA committee of Oak Middle School is sponsoring its annual Community Gift Giving Drive. Each year we work together to help all members of the community have a happy holiday season. Once again we are asking for your support. Letters are being distributed in the Monday folders requesting that you give for particular age group in order to service the variety of ages. Any and all gifts are appreciated.

If you are able to donate, please have your child bring in an unwrapped, anonymous gift to his or her homeroom. Last year we were able to donate

over 200 presents to local children. Most of the gifts remain right in Shrewsbury. We thank you in advance for your support.

### **OMS ELNA Students Visit the Heifer Project**

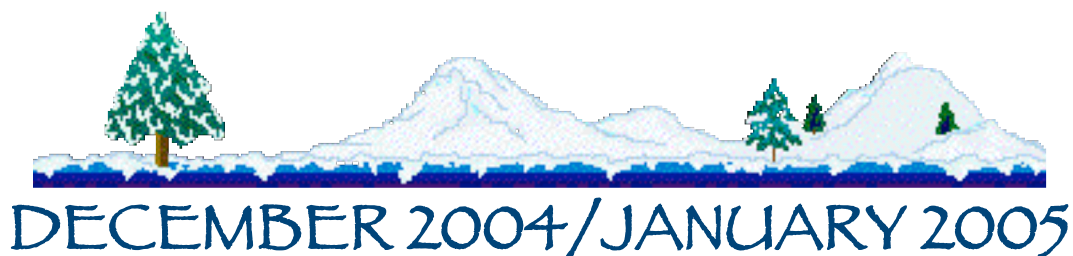
The Education Leadership for a Nonviolent Age (ELNA) students visited the Heifer Project in Rutland this November. Many of the members have been working on the Heifer Project for 3 years, raising funds to help families in third world countries as well as in the United States.

Heifer International is a nonprofit organization that “loans” animals to families and educates them on raising animals in order to improve their lives. When a family that has received an animal from Heifer has offspring they give the baby animals to another family. Some of the animals that are donated are chickens, cows, llamas, goats, pigs, and rabbits.

The ELNA members spent the day at the Heifer Project in Rutland seeing the animals, learning about hunger in the world and what individuals and groups can do to ease the pain of hunger that so many people live with each day. The ELNA group had a great trip and are very proud of the work that the present and past members have done raising about \$5000 for an ark of animals.

### **Radio City Christmas Spectacular**

Join the Shrewsbury High School Alumni Association for a fundraiser to support the Students Grants Program at Shrewsbury High School. **Thursday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00 p.m.** Cost is \$90.00 and includes ticket and bus transportation. Make checks payable to SHS Alumni Association. An order form is attached to this newsletter.



## **Calendar of Events**

| <b><u>Date</u></b> | <b><u>Event</u></b>                  | <b><u>Room</u></b>   | <b><u>Time</u></b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 12/1/2004          | Basic Sewing                         | 302                  | 2:45pm             |
| <b>12/1/2004</b>   | <b>FT 7GR Foundation Group G</b>     |                      |                    |
| 12/1/2004          | Knitting Beyond Beginning            | 308                  | 2:45pm             |
| 12/1/2004          | Not so board games                   | 269                  | 2:45pm             |
| <b>12/2/2004</b>   | <b>FT 7W Worcester Foundation</b>    |                      |                    |
| <b>12/1/2004</b>   | <b>OMS School Council Meeting</b>    | <b>SHS-2002 Room</b> | <b>7:00 p.m.</b>   |
| 12/2/2004          | Hair Braiding                        | 307                  | 2:45pm             |
| 12/2/2004          | Jazz Class                           | Cafeteria            | 2:45pm             |
| <b>12/3/2004</b>   | <b>7th/8th PTO Dance - tentative</b> | <b>Gym-Sherwood</b>  | <b>7:00pm</b>      |
| 12/6/2004          | Crafty Gifts                         | 302                  | 2:45pm             |

|                      |  |                     |               |
|----------------------|--|---------------------|---------------|
| 12/6/2004            | Math Counts                              | 106                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/7/2004            | Hair Braiding                            | 307                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/7/2004            | Scrapbook making                         | 159                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/8/2004            | Basic Sewing                             | 302                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/8/2004            | Knitting Beyond Beginning                | 308                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/8/2004            | Not so board games                       | 269                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/9/2004            | Hair Braiding                            | 307                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/9/2004            | Jazz Class                               | Cafeteria           | 2:45pm        |
| 12/13/2004           | Crafty Gifts                             | 302                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/13/2004           | Math Counts                              | 106                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/14/2004           | Hair Braiding                            | 307                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/14/2004           | Scrapbook making                         | 159                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/15/2004           | Basic Sewing                             | 302                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/15/2004           | Knitting Beyond Beginning                | 308                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/15/2004           | Not so board games                       | 269                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/16/2004           | Hair Braiding                            | 307                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/16/2004           | Jazz Class                               | Cafeteria           | 2:45pm        |
| 12/20/2004           | Crafty Gifts                             | 302                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/20/2004           | Math Counts                              | 106                 | 2:45pm        |
| <b>12/20/2004</b>    | <b>Report Cards to go Home</b>           |                     |               |
| <b>12/20/2004</b>    | <b>Grade 7 &amp; 8 Orchestra Concert</b> | <b>TBA</b>          | <b>7:00pm</b> |
| 12/21/2004           | Hair Braiding                            | 307                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/21/2004           | Scrapbook making                         | 159                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/22/2004           | Basic Sewing                             | 302                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/22/2004           | Knitting Beyond Beginning                | 308                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/22/2004           | Not so board games                       | 269                 | 2:45pm        |
| 12/23/2004           | Hair Braiding                            | 307                 | 2:45pm        |
| <b>12/24-31/2004</b> | <b>No school Christmas vacation</b>      |                     |               |
| <b>1/7/2005</b>      | <b>7th/8th PTO Dance</b>                 | <b>Gym-Sherwood</b> | <b>7:00pm</b> |
| <b>1/17/2005</b>     | <b>No school Martin Luther King Day</b>  |                     |               |